

# **Small Business Advocacy Council Meeting**

**Friday, January 27, 2006**

**8:30 AM**

**Urban Ventures**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**I. Lieutenant Governor Charles J. Fogarty, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. In attendance were:**

**II. In Attendance were:**

**Lieutenant Governor Charles J. Fogarty, Chair**

**Jerry Meyer, East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce**

**Philip Papoojian, Mereco**

**Ed Greene, Sage Business Consultants**

**Phil Papoojian, MEREKO**

**Bob Lafond, North Central RI Chamber**

**Jim Hurton, Narragansett Chamber of Commerce**

**Curtis Spence, Claymar Enterprise**

**Justin Aina, Urban Ventures**

**Darlene Evans, South Kingstown Chamber of Commerce**

**Louis Soares, RI EDC**

**Ed Mazze, Dean, URI School of Business**

**Mary Kaye Denning**

**Janet Raymond, Providence Chamber of Commerce**

**Josh Miller, Trinity Brew House**

**JR Neville Songwe, Joneso Design**

**Robert Jones**

**William Richardson**

**Hannah Hodgson, Cranston Chamber of Commerce**

**Mark Deion**

**Charles Newton**

**Denise Barge, RIMIDC**

**David Leaver, RI MIDC**

**Senator Juan Pichardo**

**Representative Thomas Slater**

**Larry Covellowe**

**Joseph Crowley**

**Julius Kolawoll**

**Claudia Cardona, Secretary of State's Office**

**David Carlin, NRI Chamber**

**Paul Grimaldi, Providence Journal**

**Lamin Sarr, Urban Ventures**

**Napoleon X**

**Simon Goudiaby**

**Vincent Levros, Urban Ventures**

**Victor Barros, Jr. RI EDC**

**Nelson Gregor**

**Capt. Steve Melaragno, Providence Police**

**Anthony Pencek**

**Marty Caper**

**Kilan Songwe**

**Katherine O'Dea, RI Tech Collective**

### **III. Approval of December 15 , 2005 Meeting Minutes**

**The Chairman called for the approval of the previous meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded for the approval of the amended minutes.**

### **IV. Comments from the Chair**

**Chairman Fogarty wished everyone a happy new year and said he looks forward to a productive and successful year for the SBAC and their members. He thanked Justin Aina for hosting the meeting and welcomed Dean Ed Mazze of URI for providing an economic outlook. Chairman Fogarty announced the dates for meeting in 2006. He reminded members that the legislative deadline for introductions is February 9th and that he looks forward to the SBAC weighing in on Policy issues during the session. Chairman Fogarty said that healthcare is one of his main priorities. He said that he is introducing legislation to create a reinsurance pool for small business to help them provide affordable healthcare for their employees.. He said that**

**the SBAC will be interested in re-instating the USSBA tax credit, the sales tax holiday and the need to focus on existing businesses in Rhode Island. Chairman Fogarty introduced Louis Soares to give the EDC update.**

## **V. RI EDC Update**

### **Louis Soares, RI EDC**

**Louis Soares handed out the recommendations of the Science and Technology Council (for more information please visit [www.riedc.com](http://www.riedc.com)). He said that they are looking into downtown competitiveness for small businesses. They are planning on having workshops to help small businesses located in downtowns improve their competitiveness. He said that the Rhodebuilder program would be starting again and he would like to invite people to apply. He said that the EDC is not looking to have an active legislative package this year but more funding in the budget to provide economic development programs. He is still working on a rating system for state agencies working in the reg flex process. This will rate the effectiveness of agencies in the regulatory flexibility process with the hopes of making the system more efficient. He said that the Every Company Counts Program continues to help the small business community in the state. For more information please visit [www.everycompanycounts.com](http://www.everycompanycounts.com).**

## **VI. Rhode Island Economic Outlook 2006**

**Dr. Edward Mazze, University of RI Business School**

**Dean Mazze said that he looks at the economy from a “realist standpoint”. You cannot look at Rhode Island by itself but part of a regional economy. The state is one of small and medium sized businesses, which are going to be the economic engine of the state. He said that 2006 is going to be better than 2005. There is going to be more cash flow and hiring. He said that construction is the fastest growing economic sector followed by health and education and hospitality. He said that there has been a lot of state investment in high tech, yet that sector has some of the slowest growth. Manufacturing is an industry on decline and manufacturers have to compete in the global economy, which inhibits their growth in RI. Education and worker training programs, health and pension premiums, the high cost of housing and the competitiveness of the states tax system are all impediments to the state economic development system. He said that the financial services sector is growing but main street businesses seem to be in some trouble. For more information on the URI school of business please visit [www.uri.edu](http://www.uri.edu).**

## **VII. Urban Ventures and Joneso Design**

**Justin Aina, Executive Director, Urban Ventures**

**JR Neville Songwe, Joneso Design**

**Justin Aina welcomed the SBAC and briefed the council on Urban Ventures services. He said that Urban Ventures is an integral aspect of urban economic development in Rhode Island. For more information on Urban Ventures, please see attachment 1. JR Neville is a client of Urban Ventures and owns a start up design firm. He has been working with the Providence Police Department on project “Brijo” which will streamline technology in police cars. For more information on Joneso Design please visit <http://www.jonesodesign.com/>.**

**Chairman Fogarty requested a motion for adjournment, which was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:50 AM.**